



To: Board Members
From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager
Date: March 12, 2021
Re: Manager's Report

ASSESSING

Board of Review appeals sessions are being held this week. The meetings are being held virtually. People can appeal via Zoom or, as in prior years, they can appeal in writing. It is still early as this is written, but appeal activity seems to be about on par with the past few years.

COMMUNICATIONS

Upgrade and Refresh Township Website



The Communications Team held initial meetings with the Granicus Account Manager to discuss the first steps in the Township Website Refresh Project. The website upgrade will improve functionality as well as give a new look and experience to site visitors. This project is estimated to take about 6 months to complete. A Granicus Project Manager will assist with design, format and migration. The Township has accrued Site Improvement Credits for this website refresh from the original website contract. The only costs associated with the new design is the additional ADA Compliance assistance and training staff requested. In the proposal of this project, staff negotiated keeping the annual maintenance, hosting and licensing fee to be the same as previous years. The first phase of the project will be the gathering of metrics and analytics of the current site conducted by Granicus. Data findings will be presented to the members of the Township Website Redesign Work Group.

Staff continues updating content on the current website to make for a smoother transition to the newly designed website. Recent Township webpages that have undergone significant design and content revisions include:

- Clerk's Office/May Special Election Information – www.meridian.mi.us/Elections

- Meridian Conservation Corps – www.meridian.mi.us/MCC
- Township Goals – www.meridian.mi.us/TownshipGoals
- Township Projects - www.meridian.mi.us/TownshipProjects
- Development Projects - www.meridian.mi.us/DevelopmentProjects

Marketing and Communications



The Spring 2021 edition of the Prime Meridian Magazine publication was completed and submitted to the printer in late February. The magazine will be arriving in homes as soon as this week. The next edition of the Prime Meridian Magazine will be published in June 2021.

During first quarter, the Communications Team met with staff from each Department to determine marketing needs and gather content to communicate to the public throughout 2021. From those meetings, staff is working on multiple marketing projects including:

- Working with Harris Nature Center staff to create an updated logo that reflects more of the Township’s Brand Standards.
- Working with the Parks & Recreation staff to enhance the Meridian Conservation Corps newsletter with a digital version.
- Developing a new Fundraiser for Meridian Cares that will allow community members to purchase a branded t-shirt online and give back to the Meridian Cares Fund.
- Working with the Public Works Team on informational inserts for residents’ utility billing.

The Communications Team continues month-long social media campaigns showing support for Black History Month, Women’s History Month, March is Reading Month, etc. Content celebrating national months or days has been extremely successful. The posts that receive the most engagement are centered around staff posts, such as National Pet Day or Wear Red Day.



Staff has started a new Social Media Strategy at the beginning of first quarter; less posts with better content for more engagement. The social platforms were becoming stagnant because of the quantity of information being posted. The new goal is to group the content, post what the community would like to see and in turn, increase engagement. The Communications Department has so many outlets to share information that not all content has to be posted to social media.

HOMTV Operations & Equipment



HOMTV continues producing and televising virtual Township Board and Commission meetings via Zoom. The virtual meeting coverage can be viewed live on the HOMTV channel, website, Facebook and YouTube. Meetings are also available on-demand at www.homtv.net. Staff is now utilizing the automated Zoom captioning feature for virtual meetings instead of contracting with a 3rd party company for this service. This change has improved meeting set-up and provides cost-savings while remaining compliant with accessibility requirements of conducting virtual meetings.



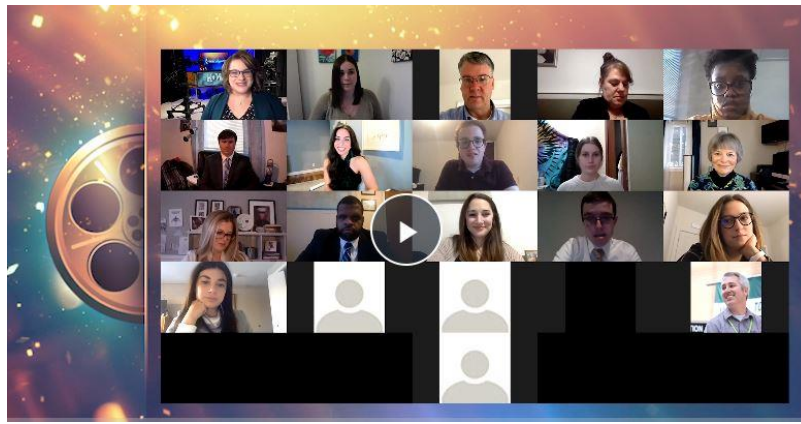
Staff began working on the HOMTV Server Room Reconfiguration Project with a local engineer and the Meridian Township IT Department. To improve efficiency and safety, old equipment in the HOMTV Server Room is being removed and will be placed on an Equipment Disposal List for sale or recycling. The remaining equipment will be re-wired and re-labeled. The HOMTV Server Room is the heart of all HOMTV and CAMTV channel operations. This maintenance will allow for quicker troubleshooting if technical difficulties occur.

The new Swagit encoder was installed in the HOMTV Server Room. This encoder is an upgrade to the live and on-demand video streaming and closed captioning services provided by Swagit. The new system allows for live closed captioning ability, added functionality and a decrease in annual costs.

HOMTV Programming & Internship

On February 25, 2021, HOMTV hosted a Virtual Intern Appreciation and Golden Tape Awards Ceremony to celebrate the commitment and hard work of the 2020 HOMTV Interns. 2020 was a difficult year, but the HOMTV interns persevered during a pandemic and produced quality work. They continued being a valuable asset to the Meridian Township community by volunteering many hours to provide residents with hyperlocal news and programming.

The ceremony is available to view online at <http://bit.ly/HOMTVGTA2021>.



HOMTV introduced a new post-election series, Meet Your Elected Officials, designed to allow residents the chance to get to know the people serving them in their local government. The new series can be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/MeetYourElectedOfficials>. As more interviews with Township elected officials are scheduled, they will be added to this program series on the channel and online.



HOMTV is planning to produce an interview series throughout March with women leaders in Meridian Township for Women's History Month. Your Choice 2021 Election programs are also being scheduled for the upcoming May 2021 Special Election featuring two Okemos Public Schools proposals.



The Spring 2021 Semester of the HOMTV Internship Program began virtually on January 19 with 10 new interns and 5 returning interns. The HOMTV Internship Program has evolved to being conducted in a hybrid virtual and in person format. Intern training has been completed virtually using Zoom and Facebook Live. Most of the intern assignments are still being created remotely with some field shooting components. Interns are providing community news to residents by conducting phone interviews, Zoom interviews, in person videos, writing online

news stories and promoting assignments on social media platforms. Staff plans to begin producing in-studio newscasts in late-March.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Building

Occupancy permits were issued for Anna's House and the International Market. Both businesses are now open. Kingman's also has received an occupancy permit and store is being stocked. An April opening is anticipated. The fifth apartment building in the second phase of the Elevation development should be ready for occupancy in May. That will complete the second phase of the development. The developer has not indicated when the third phase in the northern portion of the site will start. The first building (5 units) in the townhouse development on Chief Okemos Circle should be finished in June and the second building (8 units) finished in August. The framing of the four story building for the Red Cedar Manor development should be completed within the next month. Work is continuing on the addition for Williams Volkswagen with completion by August. The building permit for Haslett Marathon is under review. The demolition permit for the clubhouse and pool at the former Walnut Hills golf course has been issued. The clubhouse is down and work has started on the pool.



Code Enforcement

The Township, in November 2020, entered into a consent judgement with the owner of Winslow Mobile Home Park regarding the outstanding violations. The consent judgement established a time frame for the owner to repair, remove or demolish trailers and other structures on the property. The first deadline was January 21. The owner did comply and made the necessary repairs. The next deadline is April 1. In 2020, a total of 594 code enforcement complaints were handled. The main complaints were nuisance 165 and tall grass 106. For January and February 2021 a total of 73 complaints have been handled.

Planning

The Township Board approved the rezoning of 31 acres located on the east side of Central Park Drive, west of Powell Road, and north of Grand River Avenue from RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to RD (Multiple Family-maximum eight dwelling units per acre) with conditions on February 2, 2021. Staff expects submittal of a special use permit and wetland use permit applications for a future development in the coming months.

With the withdrawal of the applicant for a commercial medical marihuana facility in Overlay Area 6 (Hagadorn Road), staff opened the application window in early January and received another application for the same property. Staff is prepared to grant conditional approval for the site, which starts a 60 day time period for the new applicant to submit a complete special use permit application.

Work continues on an update to the mixed use planned unit development ordinance. The Planning Commission will consider the final draft at its March 22, 2021 meeting and may initiate a zoning amendment at that time.

Martin Investment Properties, Inc. has requested the rezoning of approximately six acres (three parcels) located on the north side of Jolly Road, east of Kansas Road, from I (Industrial) and RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to PO (Professional and Office). The Planning Commission held the public hearing at its March 8, 2021 meeting and will likely make a recommendation at its March 22, 2021 meeting. The Board will consider the request at a meeting in April.

After holding a public hearing on January 7, 2021 the Director of Community Planning and Development approved an amendment to the mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) and special use permit (SUP) approvals for the Village of Okemos project. The amendment included an increase in the overall number of residential dwelling units to 286 units and a reduction in the total commercial space in the development to 32,680 square feet.

The site plan for Woodward Way a 49 unit townhouse/apartment complex located on Sirhal Drive and north of Whole Foods has been submitted. Staff will be scheduling a hearing on the site plan within the next month.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

External Activities

- MABA Board requested Amber Clark serve as a member to better solidify information and programs built for the business community. MABA has a new president Kirk Byrens local State Farm Agent and we are seeing success with new goals. MABA will focus on member retention this year and program branding to meet annual goals
- The Economic Development Department is actively working with consultants from LEAP to begin work on the LDFA SmartZone. LDFA established in 2000 between City of East Lansing and Lansing to create tax authority of industrial zoned parcels in the communities. Tax incremental increase capture can be used to support development and improvement in those areas. Meridian Township is being considered as another entity that could be included in the SmartZone. This would capture tax increases for parcels on Dawn Ave and Towner Road.
- LEAP Art Grant submission was a collaborative effort orchestrated by the Parks Department with Community Planning. The Economic Development Department submitted the application and created a video to showcase the brand new MarketPlace on the Green – Farmer’s Market. 9 applications for this grant were submitted to LEAP. Meridian Township submitted a strong application
- The following businesses have recently opened their doors:
 - Juice Nation
 - Anna’s House
 - International Market
- The following are businesses that will open soon:
 - Lil Emil’s at Meridian Mall Pending Ribbon Cutting March 22
 - Memorial Healthcare regional health office Pending Ribbon Cutting April 20
 - Klingman’s Furniture
- Pine Village Developers have completed work assistance the small businesses at 1673 Haslett Road find a new location either permanent or temporary in Meridian Township. Demolition is the first step for vertical construction for this project and could not begin until occupants found new locations. The approved Brownfield Plan will assist to ensure development timelines are met, with plans to have the project completed by fall of 2021.
- This Department continues discussion with a potential interested party in the remaining space at Haslett Village Square. Regional partnerships with MEDC through the Redevelopment Ready program allow Meridian Township to remain eligible for grants, services and programs at this site and Haslett Village Square.

- The Village of Okemos Development Project is on schedule as we come out of the winter construction pause. During the demolition the approved MUPUD was amended and approved by Director Kieselbach to alter the commercial space and add 80 residential units on the first floor. Beginning in the next few months department of EGLE will review the property for final inspection for surface parking lot demolition. Developers saved more money on the utility underground work during demolition than they had expected, and we anticipate a lower request for reimbursement for that portion of the project. Our Department has reconnected with MEDC on possible resources to assist development.



- Efforts to reinvigorate our business retention program has begun with meetings scheduled with local business owners to address individual business needs. An overall plan and strategy will be created and implemented by summer. This includes providing our businesses more opportunity to engage with the Township and promote their business

Business Retention Program

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Community Survey

The Township produces a community survey to engage residents on a multitude of topics. With Board approval, we can begin to create and submit the survey to residents by May and receive results and analysis by July. The responses will assist our community with decision making regarding the programs and services we offer.

Redevelopment Ready

Every three years our community will need to recertify with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to hold the RRC status. This status allows us to retain our eligibility with MEDC for grants, services and programs they offer to assist with redevelopment. The Match on Main program is a \$25,000 grant that assists a new or established business moving to or growing within a DDA. With the Village of Okemos development we would be eligible as a DDA to apply for this grant to assist in that development or re-location of an established business. Holding our RRC in eligible status grants us this opportunity and more. Our deadline to submit our final documents of October 2021. Currently 75% of the way complete with RRC.

MME Fellowship

Working with Human Relations Department and Township Manager's office on MME Fellowship. This is a fellowship learning opportunity we are applying for. Deadline to apply is April 15th and would allow for an intern to gain public administration experience for 20-25 hours per week. Our commitment is to match the program of \$6,000 and contribution from MME and partnering university for \$3,000. We are eager to apply for this opportunity!

Project Table

Item	Launch Status	Completion Status	Other Notes
Community Survey	Discussion at next TWP Board Meeting will determine if we are doing a community survey created by staff.	Should be completed by JUNE of 2021 to assist with potential enhancement/edits to the budget	Once approved seek input from Township Board members and department heads for targeted questions. Work with Communications team to promote survey to community
Village of Okemos Development	Site surface demolition of parking lot and remaining asphalt removed after State final inspection and approval in Spring 2021	Vertical Construction potential launch Fall of 2021 and Spring 2022 opening	Village of Okemos development team will have an announcement on the projects next steps by the end of the month
Pine Village Development	Approval of Brownfield, MUPUD and Site Plan	Demolition and Construction Spring of 2021	No word from developers to request funds from MRF.
Micro Pantries	Approved to begin Feb 2, 2021 and continue to removal of Executive declaration of local Emergency	Currently two applications approved for Faith Lutheran Church and Okemos Library. Applications are approved by Director Kieselbach.	Girl Scouts must obtain approval for the public property locations they have presented
Okemos Beautification and Murals	First meeting of Downtown Development Authority subcommittee will be week of March 22 nd to plan downtown celebration	TBD	Local artists that painted the mural at the dog park would like to put one up in Downtown Okemos saying "it takes a village" looking for approved locations
Okemos Downtown Celebration	Planning to begin Spring 2021 Outside celebration for Village of Okemos Demo project	Fall 2021	
Business Promotion Subcommittee	Meets Monthly and could be ambassadors for the new Business Retention program strategy. Currently planning Small business initiatives, working on Business contact list for the township directory	Summer 2021	
Potential Haslett Village Square Development Status	Contact with a new architect interested in developing the remaining portion of Haslett Village Square into a mixed use	Currently the developer is still working on the finance portion of this project. Working with	

	commercial/ office and retail space.	Martin and MEDC to secure the site for development.	
Business Directory Status	In the hands of EDC and myself to ensure accuracy of many lists to be consolidated into one list	Summer 2021	
Interactive Neighborhood Map and Neighborhood HOA and Organizations Listings Status	Working with Engineering (Cara) to make an interactive map similar to Police Department but separate. This will include Green Liaison activities, new developments in the area, active Neighborhood organizations, and 15 minute neighborhood concepts (retail/medical/pet services)	This map will continue to be reviewed and edited on a regular basis to continue to provide the community with useful information.	
Business Retention Program Status	Will give to EDC Business Promotion Subcommittee to assist with planning and implementation. Identifying some of our largest property tax paying business owners as well as general engagement with businesses	Summer 2021 (JUNE)	
Redevelopment Ready Certification Status	Began completion of Recertification packet and Trello board items. Sent access to Trustee Jackson for her assistance on the project.	Completion by October 2021	
SmartZone LDFA Status	Sending final maps, parcels and projections to LEAP Consultant 2.19.21 for the LDFA to include in next board meeting and approval for inclusion	April I will need to go to all tax jurisdictions and meet to discuss this Tax Authority and the potential benefits. 5 year term of capture unless approved for additional years. Public hearings and if approved at the Township Board level we will be on the LDFA!	

FINANCE

2020 Audit

We are working on getting the 2020 books closed and schedules prepared for the Audit. Yeo & Yeo, the Township's outside auditing firm, will start the audit the week of April 19th. The Township will be required to have a separate single audit for the 2020 fiscal year due to anticipated federal funds that have been and will be received from federal grants.

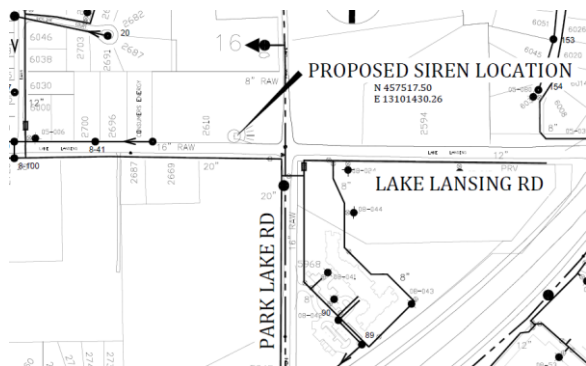
MERS Pension Payment

We have scheduled to make the additional \$1.5M payment by the end of March 2021 for the Police and Fire Divisions.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Siren Project

The 2021 siren has been ordered from West Shore Services with a tentative installation date of April. This will be the tenth siren installed in the Township with five more to be installed by 2026.



Personnel

We are continuing to recruit in many different locations of the state. Working with Communications, we have created social media posts and sent out flyers to community colleges and private ambulance services. We currently have two vacancies and are working through interviews and assessments to find a candidate.

Our Training Chief is eligible for retirement this fall, so we have started the process to complete an assessment center in late summer. After the assessment is completed, a candidate will be selected, and he or she will have the ability to learn the position prior to the current Training Chief's retirement. Succession planning is essential to support a smooth transition into an important position.

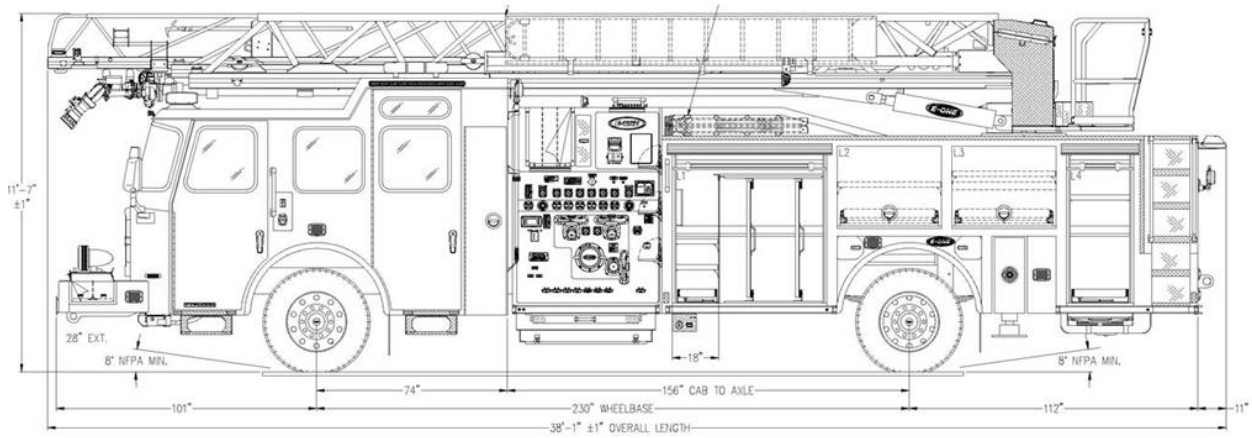
Training

Our training in 2020 decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are proceeding with our annual training plans for 2021. This year includes a new program, as well as, updates on annual required training.

- Fire operations training with all Metro Fire Departments at Burger King in Delhi Twp. in February and March
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
- Three firefighters attended NFPA Fire Inspector I training
- All firefighters and administration will receive training in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion scheduled for April
- Company inspection software training
- Ice rescue training
- CPR

E-ONE Aerial Typhoon, HP 78' Ladder

Our new ladder truck was ordered in December 2020 with an estimated arrival of early 2022. Over the past three months, we completed a review of the specifications to confirm accuracy. We expect to provide our down payment to E-ONE by the end of March.



HUMAN RESOURCES



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force

The Human Resources Department proudly serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, and at present, is working with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights to conduct training for all Township leadership. Township Board Trustees, who also serve on the task force, are included in the Township's DEI training plans. The HR Director communicated her interest in becoming certified as a National Diversity Council Certified Diversity Professional as part of her involvement on the team.

2020 Forms and Performance Plans

Township tax forms, W2s and 1099 forms, were completed in January, one week ahead of the January 31, 2021 deadline.

Employee performance communication plans run by calendar year and our managers/directors have met with staff in order to complete and turn in 2020 evaluations.

Job Postings

We are grateful to resume the job posting process. The Township is currently seeking applicants for 10 different positions, some of which, have multiple vacancies for the position:

- Clerk's Office: Deputy Clerk
- Clerk's Office: Administrative Assistant II
- Fire: Paramedic/Firefighter(s)
- Fire: Part-Time Paramedic

- Parks: Stewardship Intern
- Parks: Part-Time Naturalist
- Parks: Park Ranger
- Police: Records Division Supervisor
- Police: Officer(s)
- Public Works: Part-Time Seasonal Worker(s)

Safe Work from Home Plan

The Township’s Safe Work from Home Plan continues, and we remain open and adaptable as directives and guidelines are updated. We are grateful to all Township employees for adhering to our policy and protocol while completing in-person work.

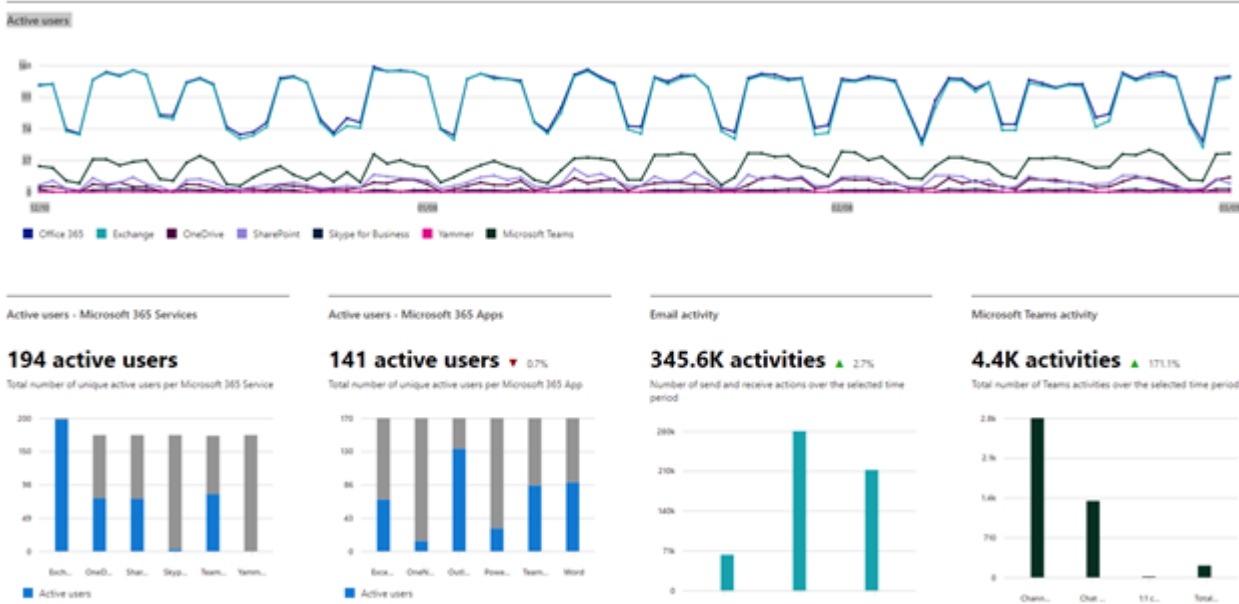
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

New Mobile Hardware for Public Works Crews



Additional iPads have been deployed for Water, Sewer, & Grounds workers. This expansion provides each employee with their own device, and secure access to email, electronic time clock, GIS systems and other Township resources including a basic license to Office 365. Additional services will be added over the coming months.

Remote Access Activity



The Township continues to leverage Microsoft Office 365 licenses to allow more flexibility for end users in all work environments. Staff continues support to scores of users with secure remote connections back to their PC's from

their own devices that they use at home. In addition to these comprehensive remote services, a significant percentage of users are now checking email, and doing limited file access from their smart phones and/or other personal devices. Staff continues to assist end users with synchronization of local files to OneDrive, increasing access to information outside of the organization.

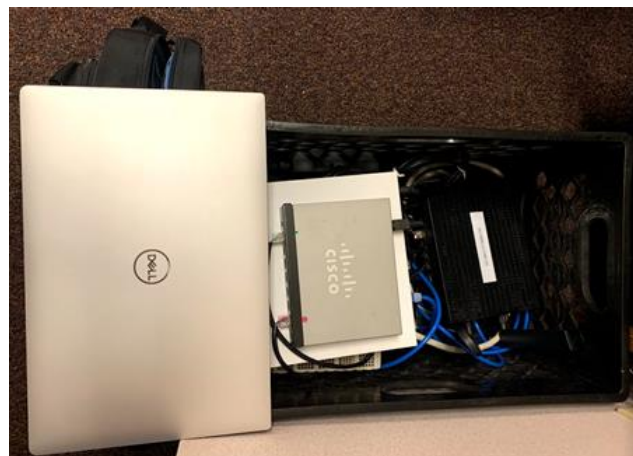
Zoom Meetings

In conjunction with the Communications & HOM TV staff, IT continues to facilitate Zoom and Microsoft Teams virtual events for internal staff, collaboration with regional partners, conduction of public meetings, and a host of other needs as they may arise.



Increasing deployment of work-from-home hardware

The Technology team continues to expand LogMeIn licensing to allow for more computer-based users to work from remote locations. In cases where employees do not have adequate technology resources in those locations, additional Township assets are being procured and assigned. In the past 30 days an additional 12 remote connection devices were allocated to employees, with more on the way. In the same period, 5 workstations have been replaced with docking laptops to allow for remote work.



Security Events & Focus on Maintenance

Since February of 2020 IT staff embarked on many new initiatives to help adjust to the new workplace, and in some cases routine updates & maintenance tasks have fallen behind. Based upon several security events over the past several months, team members are refocusing on bringing our infrastructure up to current patch levels. This includes a variety of software & hardware projects.



Telecom Review

IT staff has started review of our telecommunication costs. Focus through February was on our Verizon account. This resulted in several hundred dollars per month of cost savings. Focus is now on other cellular and terrestrial service providers.

PARKS & RECREATION

Parks Grants

Staff is currently working on two grant applications: One to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for a multi-generational play/exercise space at Towner Road Park; and the other is to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for assistance for construction of Phase III of the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail. Both of these grants are due to the DNR by April 1, 2021.

Thank you to Jay Graham for creating a boundary map and property description for Central Park. There were multiple parcels combined over the years with no final description. The DNR has required this based on the large number of grant awards for this park.

There has been a lot of grant reporting work and project reimbursement requests for the four outstanding grant projects currently underway and nearing completion. Those projects consist of the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector, Gateway Footbridge and Restroom in the Historical Village, HNC Restroom, and HNC Pavilion. All of these projects will be completed by June 1, 2021.

Preliminary work is being conducted consisting of a Phase I Environmental Study, as well as, a title search in preparation for acquiring the parcel on Okemos Road funded through the MNRTF Grant. We anticipate receiving a formal grant agreement in May or June.

We are currently pursuing a grant from AARP to fund a shade structure near the pickleball courts at Towner Road Park.

A grant application was submitted to LEAP to fund public art at Marketplace on the Green. Awards will be announced in April.

New Trail and Pathway Map

Work is underway on a new Trail and Pathway Map funded by the Ingham County Parks and Trails Millage. The map will contain icons of landmarks, historical data, regional connections and be available in hardcopy form and electronically as well. Scheduled completion for this project is June 1.

Deer Management Program

The program experienced its most successful year by culling 176 deer through the archery program and another 150 through the extended hunt lead by our Police Department. A final report will be distributed once all the deer have been processed and donations completed.

Donation

A local resident, Dr. Rajendra is donating a Labyrinth for construction in Central Park between Nokomis and the Historical Village. Jane Greenway is developing the plan and cost estimates.

Recreation Updates

After careful consideration and implementation of safety precautions, we are opening registration for youth soccer, t-ball, baseball, softball, sporties for shorties, golf instruction at Meridian Sun Golf Course, adult sand volleyball, softball and kickball, and corn hole leagues for youth and adults!

Link to video from our 2021 Ice Fishing Derby on Lake Lansing in conjunction with DNR Free Fishing Weekend created by Dan Stephens (son of Park Commissioner, Mark Stephens).

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15ctevxVR5N037l6YiXgX6i3Ipsg4MMbV?usp=sharing>

Our pickleball players have played at Towner and Hillbrook all winter long! When needed, they removed the snow and continued to play.

The 50+ Fitness group will start up once again on Monday, March 15 in the Central Park Pavilion.



Dog Park Registration – 670 dogs registered for the large and small dog park! Our large dog park is taking a pause (pause) for a couple of weeks due to wet conditions.

Meridian Conservation Corp is going strong under Emma Campbell's leadership! So far she has engaged 156 residents in education and over 150 hours of volunteer stewardship in our parks and land preserves in the last three weeks! Emma is also working on plans for planting pollinator gardens in the Consumers Energy right of way as soon as a lease agreement is executed.



Harris Nature Center Updates

The HNC re-opened for private visits only on January 19 through March 6 and conducted 112 private visitor programs. 75 people participated in virtual programs during those same dates.

The HNC building opened to the public starting March 6th.

More in-person programming is now offered including private-guided nature programs, Chipmunk Story Time and Howl at the Moon evening dog walks.

HNC staff is working with the MSU Science Festival and offering free 30 minute virtual presentation to school groups in Ingham, Eaton and Livingston counties.

The Birding Overlook, funded by the Harris Nature Center Foundation, is nearly complete.



Park Maintenance Team Efforts

- Managed removal of multiple fallen trees over trails and trimmed trees in all of the parks
- Renovated and greatly improved the classroom space at the Harris Nature Center
- Rebuilt the Mole Hill feature in the Nature Exploration Area at the Nature Center
- Completed much needed trail work in Central Park and Legg Park
- Transplanted the Elm tree in the Historical Village for the Meridian Garden Club. It is in much better soil now with more room to grow.
- Assisted Buildings Department with new kitchenette at the Municipal Building

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Maintain accreditation and meet newly added standards through the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission while preparing for our 2022 onsite assessment.

The review and update of policies and procedures is ongoing. The Department continues to meet standards set by the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (MLEAC). Three new standards were issued in 2020 and the Department is working at ensuring compliance with these new standards as well as all other existing standards. Meridian Township Police is only 1 of 34 current agencies accredited by MLEAC and the only Mid-Michigan accredited agency.



Work diligently toward full staffing (41) and provide opportunities that promote employee retention.

The Department is currently seeking candidates from the police training academies throughout the state. We currently are sponsoring Megan and Maggie Cole through the Mid-Michigan Police Academy at Lansing Community College. The Cole sisters are slated to graduate in May and will begin their field training in June of 2021. An additional candidate is in the background phase of the hiring process. The Department currently has 36 sworn officers and we continue to seek qualified candidates to reach our authorized staffing of 41.



Continue collective efforts to foster an environment that is welcoming, diverse and inclusive.

The Department continues to work at providing an inclusive and welcoming environment. With addition of the two new officers in the academy, our department will employ eight females as full-time police officers. We continue to recruit officers and cadets from all backgrounds through online efforts and in person. Officers will receive training in implicit bias in 2021.



Prepare staff for succession due to retirements or promotions through training and mentoring.

Sergeant Chris Lofton successfully completed the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice Staff and Command class on January 15, 2021. The class was delayed several times due to Covid-19, but was able to finish. The ten week long Masters level course is designed to train police executives in critical thinking, police administration, and best practices in law enforcement today.



Assist the Parks Department with the deer management efforts to reduce property damage and traffic crashes.

The Department conducted a deer cull under a permit issued by the Michigan DNR. The cull began on January 19th and was completed on March 9th. Through teamwork with the Parks Department, over 4,500 pounds of processed venison will have been donated to area food banks.

Implement new technology to improve our ability to operate remotely during an emergency or pandemic situation.

Through a grant offered by the Michigan State Police, the police department was able to purchase eleven web cameras which were distributed to the desktop computers throughout the office. The web cameras have allowed officers to attend remote training and make court appearances. We also purchased six laptop computers which has allowed our records department to function remotely when necessary.

Work toward implementation of the new countywide public safety radio networks to enhance communication and operations.

We continue to work with the Ingham County Dispatch Center to put in place the new countywide radio system. Though the project has been delayed by the installer, progress is being made daily. Antennas have been installed at the police station and the police department is ready to implement the new system once it is available.



PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING

Local Road Program

We will be opening bids for the 8.87 miles of resurfacing work identified in the 2021 local road plan on March 26th. The roads that will be resurfaced are: Skyline, Pine Hollow, Mereford, Fenwick, Overglen, Kingcross, Shaw, Potter, Edson, Colby, Park (Lake Lansing), Cliffdale, White Ash, Buckingham, Sapphire, Sequoia, Comanche, Cochise, Tomahawk, Tomahawk Circle, Lagoon, Wausau, Osage, Seneca, Ivywood, Mistywood, Spicewood, Silverwood, Shortwood, Oakwood, Indian Glen, Mojave, Farm Meadows, Cherrywood, Butternut, Conifer Circle, Autumnwood, Timberview, Fairhills and Rainbow Court.

Once we have identified the contractor, we will lock in a schedule and get notices out to the impacted residents. The specifications require that all the work be completed by October 1, 2021.

The cape seal and crack fill work will be bid in the next 45 days.

Okemos Road Closure this SATURDAY- March 13th

Please be advised that both northbound lanes will be closed for work by the County for 1-day between Mt. Hope Road and Hamilton Road this Saturday.

Pathways

Acquisition work continues on phase I of the MSU to Lake Lansing pathway. Securing the easements along the back of several properties has been difficult. Environmental contamination on several parcels has also slowed the process. We expect to complete the process and be ready to bid late this summer, with construction beginning this fall.

Phase II requires the finalization of an agreement with DTN on a revised entrance on Grand River for the pathway. We are planning a summer construction of this phase. This portion of the pathway will connect Park Lake/Grand River with Okemos Road.

A subset of this phase is IIb, which is the widening of the existing pathway along Okemos Road from Gaylord C Smith Court to the Inter Urban Pathway. Bids were opened for this work on March 16th, and will be reviewed over the next few weeks. We expect this work to get underway in late April.

Phase III preliminary work has started with input from the Ingham County Park Department. This phase will connect the eastern end of the Inter Urban to both Lake Lansing Park north and south. The envisioned route will go under the Marsh Road Bridge along the north side of the tracks and head in a northeast direction to the Green Road RR crossing. From that general area, it would loop back along Green Road and connect to the existing pathway.

One portion of phase III that will be constructed is the short connector between Lake Lansing Park South and Haslett Road. This will be constructed in conjunction with the Ingham County Nemoka Drain project to limit disturbances.

Grant funding has played a significant factor in providing the necessary funds to complete these projects, and this phase is no different. The budget for section III is \$2.6 million with \$1.95 million expected from the Ingham County Park and Trail millage, \$350,000 from the pathway millage, and \$300,000 from the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund. We will be submitting this grant April 1st to the Michigan DNR.

As pathway safety enhancements, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) will be installed at the crossing on Central Park Drive that services the Farmers Market and Central Park and the pedestrian crossing at Haslett and Van Atta Road starting in late April.

Township Signage

Our signage consultant, Corbin Design, is currently preparing the draft sign plan for the Township. This plan will provide design and guidelines for our current and future Township signage. Most recently, they received information on our brand standards including colors and fonts.

The plan will provide a concept and ultimately specifications for new gateway signs at the community entrances, monument and wayfinding signs for the Municipal complex, and a concept for the park identification signs.

Once we finalize the plan and confirm a sign design, they will assist us with fabrication and installation of the new signs this spring.

Solar Panel Project

We are in the process of executing a contract extension with the contractor we used for the south Fire Station and Farmers Market solar panel project. Not only was Absolute Environmental Solutions excellent to work with on the 2020 projects, they provided us excellent pricing for the 2021 Service Center solar roof project.

Installation is expected to start in June, with an August completion date. Once the system is on-line, it will provide 100% of the electric energy use for the building.